A Path of Marigold

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A Path of Marigold

by Donoven

Summary

William Graham is many things. An empath, a vampire hunter, and preternatural consultant to the police and FBI.

A killer has been leaving behind torn apart bodies across the Eastern coast. Will's been brought in on a case, but there's more behind this story than he thinks. The deaths are piling up, a second killer is reappearing, and Will is losing himself to the minds of the killers he's hunting. It leads Will to look for help in strange places, including a vampire that he hasn't encountered before. The question is, will this vampire kill him or save him? Even William isn't sure.

|| Hannibal (TV) set to the Anita Blake Universe. You do not need to know anything about Anita Blake to read this fanfiction. ||

|| Updates on Tuesdays. ||

-- TEMPORARY HIATUS UNTIL AUG 7TH (I'm moving across the USA). Feel free to check out my twitter (sinsationalkeru) or my tumblr (kerushi-fanart.tumblr.com or sinsational.tumblr.com) for updates. --

Notes

This is not beta'd.

Hannibal and Anita Blake do not belong to me in any way, shape, or form.

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One

Will did not want to pull the ‘badge’ card. In fact, he’d like to pretend he didn’t have a badge at all, but Detective Marcus Craine was making that difficult. The detective was getting angry enough his face was turning red and blotchy, and his voice hoarse. Ham fists were moving back and forth, and Will was currently drowning him out. Whether the detective wanted him to be there or not, Will was staying.

His partner, Peter Johnson, was far more rational. He was rubbing at his temple, letting out a sigh as Craine started trying to get officers to throw Will out of the crime scene. Problem was, they all knew the new laws. Any Vampire Hunter who passed certifications, extensive background checks, and had enough vampire deaths on their lists, could become a Federal Marshal. There’d been too many deaths due to problematic state lines, warrants, jurisdiction, and general shitty politics. A few particularly gruesome human casualties pushed it through, which meant Will didn’t need Craine’s permission to be there. Hell, he could have Craine thrown off the case, but he wasn’t going to do that. Craine just needed to remember that the past was the past and stop letting it affect their work.

Detective Johnson gave Will an apologetic look. “Do your thing, Graham,” he said, following after Craine who seemed to have some poor deputy trying to get Craine to stop smoking so close to the crime scene.

One day, his anger was going to catch up with him. Or he was going to finally have a heart attack. He was pretty sure there was some kind of bet going at the precinct, but since he wasn’t a cop anymore, he wasn’t always privy to that information. He still had a few friends though, which came in handy in these situations.

He walked over to the body. It was hot outside. 90 plus degrees with over 75% humidity, which left the scent of death permeating the air. It’d taken some time for the body to be found, since most people were inside the club, not checking out the back alley behind a dumpster, where it looked like someone had been torn apart. There wasn’t much of a body left, and it took his mind a few moments to recognize he was looking at what was once a human and not simply random meat left strewn across the alleyway. The dried blood helped.

None of the officers seemed to be looking at the scene. Will didn’t get to look at an untouched crimescene. Craine had seen to it that Will didn’t get the call until everyone else had had their chance. He didn’t like that, but it was too late and he was still trying to play nice. Craine was only one detective, and Will could deal with it. This meant he could move stuff, though. Plenty of photographs had already been taken. He put on gloves, little plastic booties over his shoes. One day he’d invest in some mechanic coveralls so he could kneel, for now he’d just have to squat.

One part of a torso was torn open and tossed against the dumpster. A ripped open piece of skull next to it. As his eyes darted around the crime scene, and wasn’t sure what had done this. Supernatural strength was involved, so it was right to call him in. Craine would’ve known that, but seemed to ignore protocol. Lovely.

“What’chu doin’ there, hot stuff?”

He smiled despite the crime scene, and looked over his shoulder at one Beverly Katz. “Hey.” He stood up, but didn’t offer a hand. “Feds finally get called in?”

“You know it.” She pulled her hair back into a ponytail, and stepped over to look at the torso with him. “Huh. Fancy. Think this guy was wearing some clothes when he was attacked? Jack’s in the middle of getting all the evidence from Craine. Nice guys you’ve got down here.”

She tilted her head and pulled out some plastic baggy and tweezers. Will could never keep up with her conversation-wise, but once she started to work, she quieted down.

A portion of the lung remained inside the torso, and she moved it aside with a gloved finger before using the tweezers to pull out what looked like a piece of hair. “Gotcha.”

“Werewolf?” he asked, looking closer at the specimen.

She gave him a grin, “Maybe. Fur isn’t exactly my specialty, but give me a microscope and I’ll figure it out.”

Bev took a moment to carefully bag it, putting it into a larger container that was sitting just outside the blood splatter. “Mind if I look at more, or you gonna do your thing?”

“Will!” came an angry boom at the front of the alleyway. Will could recognize that voice anywhere, and he stood up from his squatting position, seeing Jack staring down a red-faced Craine. “Get over here!”

Will looked over at Bev, who wiggled her eyebrows at him with an amused glint in her eyes, before making quick work to join the two angry men. He at least remained outside of touching distance.

Jack Crawford was a man who knew his size. An ex wrestler, 6 feet tall, and wide as a car. He didn’t have to use his aggressive stance often, as he had a bit of a reputation, but Craine apparently didn’t get the memo. He was now. Will didn’t bother hiding how pleased he was with this particular scene. Seemed Karma was coming in the form of one angry FBI agent.

“Detective Craine here says you were called as soon as they found the body. That true?”

Normally, Will would try to play nice. The FBI and local police usually worked well together, but Craine was pissing off everyone left and right today. “Got the call about half an hour ago.”

“That so.” It wasn’t a question, so Will didn’t reply. “Go do your thing. We were going to call you for this guy anyway. Hit a few different locations. Seems to be heading north. Let me know when you’re done here. I want to talk to you in my office.”

Will nodded, headed back to Beverly who seemed to be very interested in a portion of a foot.

He could still hear Jack behind him, who didn't understand why Craine wasn't taking advantage of a Federal Marshal who was on the FBI's Consultation list. The detective kept his mouth shut. Not a smart move.

Ignoring the scene behind him, he returned to Beverly. She was moving around the foot now, and lifted it up to look underneath it. "This guy was pretty big when he was put together."

Price and Zeller showed up then. The wonder twins of the FBI department.

Zeller came over and held out a bag to Bev, who shook her head. She put it back instead, and glanced up at Zeller, "I have a fun new jigsaw puzzle for you, Zellie."

"Don't call me that."

Price snorted off to the side, and Will went to join Price near the torso. He glanced up when Will approached, pointing at the torso, "Third body like this. This guy was a therianthrope, if he's like the other victims."

Will didn't need this many people on the scene. They were already moving stuff, which would make it harder for him to focus. "Can you guys--"

The three turned to look at him, Bev holding up an eyeball and blinking at him as if she wasn't just moving things around the crime scene. "Right. Right, right, right." She set the eyeball back down, then stepped back. Zeller and Price followed, though not before a rude comment was uttered under Zeller's voice. Will ignored it, like he always did.

Standing up he moved before the crime scene, closing his eyes and allowing himself to ground his mind. He shut out the noise of the sirens, Jack keeping his voice at an even temper, Zeller complaining, the police chatting about anything other than the massacre, and the sirens and nosy pedestrians.

Will couldn't explain his ability. He was a psychic, an empath. It was similar to clairvoyance, though at a lesser level. He could get emotional impressions from a scene. Strong empaths and those with the 'gift' could get visions, live the feelings of the attacker or victim, and often went insane. Luckily, Will wasn't that strong. He could put together pieces, form an image, get certain impressions, perceptions, thought patterns and the like, but it was never a full picture. Empaths who could do that tended to kill themselves at an early age. Feeling everyone around tended to be a pretty horrific experience.

With the distractions gone, he began to put together an impression. Despite the violence, he didn't feel anger. The violence was a mask. The killer's way of hiding his true intentions.

I don't feel anger. I don't feel remorse. I feel ***purpose*** .

The scene puts itself back together. There's portions of the body missing, but that doesn't bother him.

A wolf is backing up, growling up at him.

I'm going to help you.

The wolf growls louder, and it's obvious he's young. New to this. Hesitant and unable to shift.

You weren't meant to be like this. I need to -- reset you.

He reaches out, about to touch the wolf when someone grabs his shoulder and pulls him back to reality. Out of the mind of a deranged killer.

"--step on it!"

"What?" Will blinks, turns to see Price grabbing his shoulder to stop him from moving forward. Zeller's on the other side of Price, looking pretty pissed off.

"I said," Zeller repeated, "Stop! You're about to step on it!" He points down at the eyeball, which Will was, in fact, about to step on.

He pulls his foot back and resets himself, and glances down to see Price had accidentally touched him with bloodied gloves. Damn. Bev was going to need to take this with her. He liked this coat.

Bev held out her hand. Will expertly took off his gloves, tossing them into a bag just outside the crime scene, then pulled his coat off and handed it to her. It went into a larger bag, set into a case that would be sent to the FBI headquarters for her to analyze.

Price at least had the decency to look a little sheepish, though Zeller just looked annoyed.

Jack seemed to be done with Craine, at least. Finally joined the rest of the team. "Well? Someone give me something." He ran a hand along the back of his neck, sweat starting to stain his shirt. The anger and heat were getting to him, which meant everyone was behaving remarkably.

He lifted a hand, drawing attention to himself. He kept his eyes lowered, focusing on shoulders, necks, torsos-- anything but their eyes. "Whoever this is, he's trying to fix them. Cure their-- lycanthropy."

Without looking at them, he could feel the disbelieving gazes.

Zeller, always quick to complain, spoke up first. "Not to be the one to point out the obvious, but if he was--" he held up his hands to make air quotes-- "'fixing' them, don't you think they'd still be alive."

"Unless he thinks killing them *is* fixing them," Beverly offered. He really did owe her a decent bottle of wine. She made this team tolerable.

Jack nodded, pointing between Bev, Price, and Zeller. "Clean this up. Run all the usual reports, and meet up with me. I want to find this guy. Now!"

The team broke up quickly, and Jack turned his attention to Will. "You, my office. I need to catch you up to speed."

Will nodded, and slipped out of the plastic booties that seemed more like shower caps than boots. It'd take him some time to get to Jack's office, but at least he wasn't demanding sharing a car ride. Jack needed to work out some of his aggression, and perhaps bossing around the Three Stooges would do as much. "And put on your badge!" Maybe not just yelling at them.

He fished out his badge and put the chain around his neck without argument and headed out towards the swarm of pedestrians. It shouldn't have surprised him to see Freddie Lounds. Her ginger ringlets bouncing as she waved her hand to get his attention.

"Graham! Can you tell us anything about the case? Is it a vampire? Are you hunting again?" She wasn't the only reporter there, but the only one with a shrill enough voice to carry over the others.

He ignored her, headed to his car and let a few officers help him through the crowd. More questions about this being the third kill, but the car drowned her out. His fingers brushed down his face, taking a few deep breaths. She was right, it had been a little bit since he'd hunted, but injuries tended to do that. He'd been cleared to hunt again, so he was. Hunting Supernaturals was his job, and he was good at it.

Calmed, he shoved his keys into the ignition and slowly moved through the crowd and towards Jack's office. Knowing him, his assistant would already have the files pulled and ready for him. There wasn't an office for him there, and he didn't want to abscond Jack's, so he would probably head to his usual location when he was helping them: an empty jury room where he could spread out all the case files and go over them, get to know the victims as well as he knew the criminal. There had to be more than just lycanthropy that linked these victims together, and Will was going to figure it out. One way or another.

Two

Chapter Notes

I don't own Hannibal or Anita Blake. You don't need to be familiar with the Anita Blake universe to enjoy this story.

Updates Tuesdays. <3

Not beta'd or even proof read. xD I'm terrible.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This particular jury room was a smaller one found in the FBI headquarters. There were better rooms for this, rooms where Will could hang up the evidence, pace back and forth and still have the information at eye height, but his old habit still remained. He was walking around the table slowly, chewing on his thumbnail with his other arm wrapped around his middle. The process of requesting detailed information of the victim's possessions, whereabouts, and packs had already been started, but wouldn't come in for a couple of days. The police were gathering their own data, but Will needed to know the victims as intimately as he knew the killer.

It was easier to slip into the killer's mind, but victims he gathered information on through research. A slower process, but he'd rather have the mind of a killer filling his nightmares than intimately knowledge of what it felt like to die under the killer's hand.

Jack gave two quick knocks before entering the room, two large coffees in hand. "Figured you'd be here." He'd removed his suit coat, his pale blue shirt showing his sweat stains and rolled up over his forearms. He was still sweating, anger rolling off of him, but he'd gathered himself enough that Will figured this conversation would be pleasant.

He didn't mind working with Jack. He was a good guy, just overworked and understaffed a little too long.

"Thank you," Will said as he took the coffee from Jack. Black, two sugars, hot. Just the way he liked it, despite the heat outside.

Jack grunted and took a seat at the head of the table, putting his elbow on the arm of the chair and rubbing his eyes with his pointer finger and thumb. "Please tell me you found something. I need some good news right now."

Will was blowing on his coffee through the small slit, and let his eyes roll up to take Jack in. "Not yet. Whoever this is, he's getting-- *cleaner.* " He wasn't sure if that was the most appropriate word for it, but it suited it. The crime scene this morning had been clean compared to the other two he was looking at. He glanced down at the first scene, which had

been little more than minced meat and blood. The images alone would soon be added to his nightmares, but it'd find a home among those already littering his brain. "Myrtle Beach, South Carolina first, then Norfolk, Virginia." His eyebrows pinched together, before turning to glance in Jack's area. "I'd like to go see the scenes."

"They're cleaned by now, Will."

"I know."

Jack gave a heavy sigh, but nodded all the same. "I suspect you'll want to interview the friends, family, and pack?"

"Yeah." The supernatural community was not overly fond of humans, but according to the law, Will wasn't strictly human. Human enough to hunt Supernatural creatures that earned themselves a bounty, but not enough to qualify for the FBI. He'd started out a cop. Worked hard. But he didn't have the best control of his abilities at the time, which got him disqualified for becoming FBI. An injury from a particularly nasty vampire left him leaving the force, and returning to school to study Preternatural Biology. Despite not qualifying for the FBI, they certainly liked to have him present guest lectures to future FBI agents. He guest spoke at many universities throughout the country, started hunting, and earned himself a right to assist both in local and FBI cases. The only reason he'd shown up at the crime scene so quickly was the fact that he'd just finished a lecture at UBalt.

Silence fell over the room, Jack seeming to need the quiet and Will not minding a quiet environment. He looked at a picture of the first victim.

In life, Jason Whitmore had been an attractive man. Square jaw, blue eyes, blond hair swept back, all smirks in the pictures they were provided. He was at Myrtle Beach on vacation for the summer. He went with a designated member of the pack, who happened to be his girlfriend. Her family was part of the local pack, and he had been planning to propose.

The night he was murdered, he shouldn't have been left alone. Newer wolves tended to shift during times of great stress, whether good or bad. It wasn't unheard of for werewolves to accidentally kill someone if they became too agitated or in the throes of sex. Legally, they were supposed to get three months of leave from their jobs with no repercussions, but it didn't always happen that way. Jason was lucky. He was bitten at the beginning of his summer vacation and now, in early August, he should have enough practice and control to return to school when the semester started.

He'd never get his degree.

Until that three month mark, and a test from government facilities, new wolves weren't allowed to be alone.

At first, the police assumed Jason's guardian had been taken, but Will wasn't sure. All the blood tests revealed only Jason's, no one else.

His guardian had yet to be found. Neither had Jason's girlfriend.

The second murder was much the same. The victim's name was Allen Martin. Outside of being a werewolf, he had no other connection to Jason. He lived at home with his mother, worked at a call center, and while he was only twenty-five, he hadn't aged well. Bald, glasses, beady eyes, pockmarks, but by all accounts a nice man. He was working to become a supervisor and took an active role in his company. Helped the company become well known in the community by hosting charity events for the local hospital, schools, and animal shelters. He was going places.

Everyone who spoke about Allen had only nice things to say. 'The world was a lesser place without him.'

Will doubted anyone would say that kind of thing about him when he died.

"Will!"

He glanced up at Jack, who had a concerned look on his face. "Sorry. What'd you say?"

Jack didn't look impressed but didn't comment on it. "When do you want to leave? I'll come with." They didn't have much time to investigate. Three murders, a week apart. It left them 6 days to figure this out before another werewolf was killed.

His volunteering didn't ease Will. Normally he'd work with the locals, they knew the victims and their relatives better than Jack, but Will realized that maybe Jack was going for his own reasons.

"As soon as possible," he replied, and helped himself to more coffee.

"Do you want to go to Colorado?" Jason was from Fort Collins, Colorado. Grew up in a college town and was attending CSU, before he died.

Will thought on that for a moment, before shaking his head. "No. This killer, he didn't know them intimately."

Jack hummed in thought, silence filling the air again. Will was halfway through his coffee and had begun pacing once more before Jack spoke again. He had his phone in hand, texting and rubbing at his chin while he waited for the vibration to signal a return message. "Sarah's booking us flights now. We leave at five in the morning. I'll pick you up." With that, he took his time getting out of the chair, hand resting on the table to help him up. It was moments like this where Will remembered he was nearing his fifties.

"See you tomorrow. And thanks again for the coffee, Jack."

"Anytime."

The door closed behind him, and Will was left alone with the pictures. "Why did he choose you?" They didn't answer.

Part of him wonders if the only connection is the fact that they are werewolves. If that's the case, it's going to make finding the killer that much harder. Random acts of violence are more

difficult to track, and the only patterns they've found are newer wolves, at night, missing guardians, and the Eastern coast.

He doubted the guardians were alive. This killer was moving. It'd be harder to move up the coast with hostages. Even if they were human, keeping hostages and moving was difficult, but werewolves were trickier. Their bodies were too hot for most sedatives to work, and keeping them contained, quiet, passive was something werewolves fought against. No, this killer had done something to the guardians. The problem was, Will had no idea what. Neither did anyone else.

Finishing his coffee, he dumped it out and looked at the clock. It wasn't too late in the day, but he'd need to start making arrangements if he was going to be gone a few days.

Pulling out his phone, he flipped through his contacts until he landed on Dr. Alana Bloom. She was a friend he'd made, someone who had guest lectured at GWU a few times with them. They'd done the dance back and forth, eyeing each other with curiosity until he'd finally approached her.

Things didn't work out the way he'd wanted. Alana was stunning, intelligent, but always managed to hold back with him. She kept her distance, and Will had respected that, allowed a friendship to grow between them, but nothing more.

She answered on the fourth ring, and he could feel the wind blowing into the microphone.

"Will! You have good timing. I just finished a class." She was a professor, sometimes FBI consultant, though she was better with human cases than preternatural ones.

"How'd the class go?" Will did not like small talk. He was absolutely terrible at it, but went through the motions nonetheless.

He could practically hear her grin over the phone, already used to his behavior. "Fine. I have one student that's retaking a course. I shouldn't have volunteered for summer courses."

"I tried to talk you out of it."

"And I didn't listen. I guess I'll have to live with those consequences." It was said in good humor, and he heard a door open and close, followed by another. The wind cut off silently as she must have entered her car, another door closing and movement of clothing as she adjusted. "You don't call me often. Everything alright?"

"Yes, yes." Will nodded, despite the fact that she couldn't see it. "I'm helping Jack with an investigation. It's going to take me out of town for a couple of days--"

"Yes."

He blinked, not expecting her to answer so quickly. "I don't know how long I'll be gone."

A light chuckle filled his ears. A noise that always left her sounding sweet. Alana was like Allen. The world was a better place for her existing in it. "It's fine, Will. You know I don't

mind taking care of the dogs. I'm about to drive, so I'm putting the phone down. Email me the details." She paused, before adding, "And be careful," before hanging up.

Alana had a secret stash of ugly magnets she kept on the fridge under her desk in her office. He'd make sure to pick a few up while he was gone and add them to her collection. Knowing him, she'd get a few more dog magnets. The most recent addition was a pug in a bikini on a beach. Ridiculous, but adorable. She retaliated with insulting mugs. His favorite was one that said 'Have a Good Day' but the bottom was a hand giving the finger.

With Alana off the phone, he pocketed his cell and glanced at the table. He wasn't going to sleep tonight. He wanted to, he craved sleep, but he also needed to learn as much about these murders as possible.

Another knock sounded on the door, and he glanced up to see Sarah come in. She was carrying a large box of files, but moved with ease. He'd heard she grew up on a farm lofting hay with her brothers. She'd lost the accent, but not the muscle.

"This is what I could gather before you leave tomorrow. The files need to stay, but I've emailed you PDF documents that have everything."

Sarah was a godsend.

He walked over to the file, leafing through it. A list of the victim's positions. Jason's possessions in his hotel room and Allen's in his home.

She brushed her hands back and forth over each other, before straightening her floral blouse and grey suit coat. "We also have information on the third victim. I only have scanned documents right now. Mr. Crawford is looking over it first, but will email you when he's done."

He gave her an awkward smile. One of his favorite things about Sarah was the fact that she was too busy to daddle and force conversation on him. With the information given, she gave him a friendly wave and headed out the door once more. Left to the paperwork, he started cataloguing everything. Writing down anything that was similar between the two victims. Noting items he wanted a closer look at. Their cell phones and laptops once IT was done with them. Some notebooks and journals. He wanted to know them outside of their deaths. The humans, or werewolves, they were. If there were journals, he wanted to learn more about their transitions. Maybe there was a connection there.

He hadn't realized how much time had passed until he jumped, his phone vibrating in his pocket and surprising him. Pulling it out he blinked away his momentary panic and noted it was a text from Jack. Seemed he'd sent the files over.

Glancing at the time, he realized it was close to eight. He needed to pack. Shit. It'd still be an hour drive to get home and he needed to get the dogs situated.

It took him a bit to pack everything up, but he had a list of information he needed to check out. He could dedicate the rest of the night to familiarizing himself with the documents Jack sent over.

Definitely a long night.

Chapter End Notes

Once more I'm keeping comments off, though thank you to everyone who gave it kudos and bookmarked this. I seriously can't get over the fact that 35 of you liked this.

(Especially since I have no idea wtf I'm doing.)

Three

Chapter Notes

> Early upload, since I might be busy tomorrow. I was going to make this chapter about half this length, but eh. Have a long chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jack had been kind enough to bring him strong coffee the next morning. He'd spent the evening emailing Alana, taking care of the dogs, packing, and getting to know Theodore 'Tod' McCartney.

Tod was not an active man in society. He was a redhead with a long beard that trailed down to a beer gut. An ex musician who was bartending at a local dive. Sometimes he fixed motorcycles, but more of a hobby than to earn money. He lived in a trailer park that was next to the Back River. Didn't speak to his neighbors, but no complaints from any either. None of them knew he'd become a werewolf, given the reports.

After getting to know the victim he sent an email to Baltimore Wolf Queen to set up an appointment for that evening. Despite the fact that he was going to be traveling across several states, the flights would be quick. He'd have enough time to jump from DC to Myrtle Beach, then to Norfolk, and enough time to make it to make it back for her weekly pack meeting.

Jack said this was a waste of time, but he was going anyway. He needed to know as much as possible, and Jack would let him have that, even if he didn't understand.

The plane ride was short. He dozed off through most of it, not coming to until the plane was bouncing down the runway during landing. He jerked awake and Jack let out a small, nasal laugh.

A car was waiting for them when they landed. Jack adjusted his suit as they walked to the car. Unlike his "boss", Will didn't really care how he looked. Jeans, tucked in, button up shirt, and his badge strung around his neck was enough for him. He'd go in a t-shirt if Jack would let him, but if they were going to speak with family members of the victims, he didn't want to be completely disrespectful.

He turned on his phone when they reached the car, and found a few text messages waiting for him.

> *From Bev* : Hey! Found something I thought you'd like to check out~

He sent back a quick reply asking her what she found.

Alana also sent him a message, but it was a picture of all his dogs sitting and staring up at the phone. She must have been holding a treat in her hands.

Will sent back a picture of the landscape as they drove by. It was his way of letting her know he'd landed safely.

Jason's death took place behind a club near the ocean, much like the other two. A theme. Jack already had boats being patrolled. Stopped. Inspected. Will wasn't so sure. While he couldn't give a logical reason as to why that didn't feel right, he knew the killer wouldn't use a boat.

"It's not about the boat, Will. People are scared. This killer," he paused, licking his lips and frowning. A car cut him off, and he grumbled choice words under his breath. He glanced at Will, then back at the road and picked back up on his train of thought. "Killer's already in the newspapers. Freddie was kind enough to give him a name: The Bluhm Splatter."

He scoffed, "The painter?" It was in poor taste, but he could understand why. "Shouldn't that be 'Splatterer'? Or 'Bluhming'?"

"Will." His tone was chastising, but Will didn't really care.

"Hmm." He felt Jack's eyes on him again, but he was staring out the window. He was too tired to deal with it.

Jack sighed, and pulled off the road, parking in the lot for the club. After shutting off the car, he turned in his seat to face the other. "Look, these murders are coming quickly. People are worrying. If stopping a few boats and asking questions helps direct some of that energy, then that's good. A boat would be a good place to hide. A good place to keep hostages. It makes sense."

"I know, Jack. I know." And he did, it just seemed like a waste of manpower. He wanted to give him a better answer, a better direction, but all he had was instinct and the force needed something to do. "You forget, I used to be a cop."

"No. I just wanted to remind you of what that felt like." He got out of the car then, just as Will got another incoming message.

Lifting up his phone, he saw an attachment from Bev. Opening the picture his eyes immediately widened and he let out a disgruntled sigh. It was a picture of his graduation day from the police academy, featuring a terrible buzzcut and even worse peachfuzz mustache. The graduating class all grew out their mustaches, and while he had a healthy scruff now in his thirties, his younger self didn't quite manage it.

Another message followed quickly after.

From Bev : Must say that's a good look for you.

He didn't respond. Her laughter playing in his head was enough.

He got out of the car and followed Jack to the alleyway. It looked like all the others he'd seen, nothing really unique about it without the added decorations of body parts. The

photographs had shown these walls splattered with blood and gore. Bits of body pieces. Tod had some portions of his body that were still whole, but Jason wasn't as lucky.

Some police preferred not to think of the victims as humans. Keep a distance. It was hard to think of so much meat as human, but Will forced himself to. The victims deserved that much.

The images were burned in his head of what the body had looked like. He moved around slowly, taking in the details and filling in the differences between the photos and his current reality. His fingers reached out, traced along the edge of a dumpster. It might not have been the exact same one, but his imagination supplied images of it covered in blood anyway.

He closed his eyes, allowed himself to *feel.* It was weaker here, after so much time, but the fresher kill in Baltimore helped. Allowed a connection. It was weak at first. Soft impressions filled his mind, and it took him a few moments to latch onto a thought and pull it to the forefront.

I'm going to help you. I'm going to ***heal*** *you. This is my--*

He frowned, eyes flashing open and standing suddenly as he stared at the edge of the dumpster.

"No." He moved away from the scene and the feeling that clouded his mind, pacing back and forth as he tried to accept what his mind was telling him. One hand rubbed at his eyes, the other rested on his hip as he moved. Vaguely he could hear Jack talking to him, but he ignored it. He needed to sort it out.

His "visions" weren't always easy to follow. It felt more like an impression left in his subconscious, an imprint. A mathematical problem he then had to calculate and solve to see the finished result. His mind had to put the pieces together, fill in the information from something that couldn't be explained to something he could vocalize. He drowned out the noises of the city, people, everything, and focused internally while he moved. "This," he started, but paused once more to gather the image fully into a constructed picture. It didn't make sense, but he knew the piece he'd put together was true.

"Jack, he's not trying to kill them."

"Excuse me?"

He doubted Jack would understand. Disbelief was plain on his face, and anger that Will had the audacity to propose such a thing.

Will tried to explain once more. "He thinks he's helping them. Or--or he wants to." His brows pulled together and he glanced around the alley, not wanting to meet Jack's eyes. "He's trying to help, but something is going wrong."

"Wrong," Jack repeated, anger and disbelief clouding his words. "Wrong!" He let out a small laugh that held no humor, before he raised his voice, "How is murdering them helping them, Will?"

“I don’t know. I wish I did. Look, I don’t know what you want to hear, but that’s what I feel.”

“That isn’t good enough!”

The silence was piercing in his ears after Jack’s elevated voice. Will let it sit between them, not particularly ready to test the other’s anger. He kept his eyes averted. It was easier to avoid feeling the intentions of another person if he didn’t make eye contact.

“Come on,” Jack said as he headed to the car. “We’ll check out the hotel and see what you feel in Norfolk.”

* * *

The hotel revealed nothing. They were there for little over half an hour, before Jack took them to lunch and they made their way back to the airport. Another short flight later and he was in his third state of the day. Second alleyway. Exhaustion pulled at him, but he ignored it. Lacking sleep was a feeling he’d long since grown used to.

He was on his second large cup of coffee, just finishing the last of the 24 ounces when they parked on the side of a street. A large sign flashed “Surf n’ Turf Bar” to one side, the other appeared to be a Thai Food restaurant that was now under new management. It must have been recently purchased, as the sign was covered by a banner, one tie down loose and leaving the sign moving with the breeze.

He tilted the disposable cup up, finishing it off and tossing it into the open dumpster.

Allen wasn’t a person who attended clubs. Despite his extra work within the community, he preferred to stay at home most nights. The night he’d been killed had been an exception. It was a coworker’s birthday, and his guardian was a mutual friend. The two had showed up together and gone to join the rest of the party. Allen handed over a small gift, drank a bit of water, but mostly kept to himself, according to the eye-witness accounts. He and his guardian, a woman named Meira Dahan, mingled for a bit. No one remembered them leaving.

Jack focused on the guardians, in the hopes that they were alive, but Will didn’t. The living were a distraction for him and his abilities. His job was to find the killer, get into his head, think as the killer thought to discern motivations, goals, catch them before their next victim. If he focused too much on trying to find the living, it’d divide his attention away from finding the killer. Plus, he had a strong impression the guardians were dead. Until their bodies were discovered, or they were found and Jack could question them, he put them from his mind. He’d play connect the dots between what they both found after this trip with Jack’s help.

He focused on the environment around them, grounded himself into the scene and let the light of day fade to night within his mind. The impressions flashed through his mind. *Wolf. Scared. Excitement.*

I’m ready this time. I’m here to help you. To part you. This is my design.

His hand raises and he closes his eyes, giving himself into the emotion the killer feels. He's elated, finding himself closer to his purpose. This is what he wants to do. He wants to *help.*

Until it goes *wrong.*

No. No. This isn't what is supposed to happen. No!

He sucks in a pained gulp of air as the regret and loss sore through his body. Once he's returned to reality, and Jack is standing in front of him again instead of the remains of a body, he lets out his shuddering breath.

"He doesn't want to hurt them," he frowns. "He wants to help them. Something is just--going wrong."

"I'll say." Jack is relaxed now, he's had time to relax, to process what Will is saying, even if he doesn't like what he's hearing. "What's 'going wrong'? What's he--attempting to do?"

Will shook his head. "He just--" He closes his eyes, tries to pull the feeling back into him. "He wants to make them *better* , Jack. I don't know what that means right now, but he wants to help. Did anyone find any sickness or problems in the tissues of the victims?"

It was rare. Human diseases didn't survive in werewolf bodies, simply because their temperature was much higher than a human's. Technically, being a werecreature was a disease. It was highly recommended that those who were werecreatures didn't work in jobs where blood was involved: doctors, nurses, tattoo artists, etc. Technically, a person couldn't be fired for becoming a werecreature, but pressure was placed in certain circumstances. Teachers, police officers, firemen, public service positions were all encouraged to leave their positions if they contracted the disease. It wasn't always fair, but the ADA had yet to catch up on what rights the supernatural had.

"The reports showed nothing out of the ordinary."

Will didn't know what to think about that. "Maybe-- maybe being a werewolf is the problem?"

Jack raised an eyebrow at that, pushing his suit coat back as he rested his hands on his hips. "You're telling me this killer wants to cure them of lycanthropy?"

He shrugged, "If that's the only thing wrong with them."

"That's impossible."

Will couldn't argue that. He nodded, rubbed a hand along his scruff and left the palm of his hand over his mouth as he took in a few breaths of air. It felt right, but that didn't mean it was. A pattern for the victims had been developed. All young, healthy, fresh werewolves who were new to their lycanthropy. All near the coast. "We need to warn the packs."

Jack nodded. It couldn't hurt to warn them, though Jack wouldn't want to create a panic. "We'll tell them to watch their newest members closely."

Will knew Jack would get the communication out, and as there was nothing else to gain from remaining in this alleyway, he went back to the car. Next was the victim's home. A place he didn't particularly wish to go. A grieving mother was never a pleasant experience, and Will didn't wish to feel it. However, he needed access to Allen's room. Thus, he'd deal with it.

The drive was quick. Allen had lived in the middle of suburbia, taking the basement of his childhood home. He'd lived there his entire life, though Will suspected the home was in better condition when he was younger. The pale blue paint was beginning to peel and reveal a greenish shade beneath. The lawn needed to be mowed, weeds pulled, but it wasn't ugly. A little bit of work was needed to put back into shape. Nothing a weekend couldn't fix.

Jack knocked on the door for him. Will adjusted his glasses. Nothing came for a few minutes, and when Jack knocked once more curses were heard from inside.

A tiny woman opened the door, squinting at them and leaning against an oxygen tank. She inhaled deeply through her nose before grumpily asking, "What?"

"Hello, ma'am. I'm Special Agent Jack Crawford. This is Federal Marshal Will Graham. I called you yesterday to have access to your son's room." Jack was speaking calmly, attempting to be polite against the glare he was receiving. He even managed a smile. Will was impressed.

Glaring seemed to be the only emotion Ms. Martin was capable of. Her skin pulled as she frowned, looked them both up and down a few times, and coughed heavily into a handkerchief before stepping back a bit to open the door. She waved them in with the soiled cloth, and began limping towards her chair in the living room. "Door at the end of the hall."

"Thank you," Jack replied, and lead the way towards the room. Jack had already been here a few times, but Will hadn't the pleasure.

The house smelled like old, worn in cigarette smoke. The walls yellowed with it. He frowned, covering his nose and mouth as they made their way down into the basement. Here it was a little cleaner. Allen seemed to collect quite a few things: games, books, bobblehead dolls. Several bookshelves showing off his collection lined two walls. His bed pressed up against another. Desk and computer with several monitors taking up another. A few weights were shoved over in a corner, and didn't seem to get much use, judging by the dust.

He started to look over the books. Most were bland, random genres. He seemed to be a fan of a few fantasy novelists and comic books. However, the bottom row was full of composition books. Pulling one out he noted that it seemed to be a journal. He started to leaf through it, and glanced up at Jack who was watching him. "Can we take these?"

"Will they help with the investigation?"

"It will help me."

"Alright." He went to grab a few boxes from the car. When he returned, Will was already skimming through a few of the poems. Some were decent. Some weren't. He was curious why the young man didn't pursue it. Perhaps he'd find the answer in the journals. They hold

a mix of random words, lyrics, poems, doodles, and actual entries. It'd allow Will to connect to the victim as much as he had the killer.

When Jack returned, he began to move the journals into the box. It'd take him some time to go through them, but he didn't mind.

There wasn't much else the room had to offer. Will took his time and looked around as much as possible. He spent some time on the computer, which had the password on a stickynote attached to the monitor stand. Allen was rather cautious, set his browsers to clear their history whenever he closed them. He dabbled in a bit of art, but had folders dedicated to artists he liked. A few commissions for some of his flyers for his various volunteer projects. Lots of video games.

His phone was waiting for him in DC, as was the laptop, but there wasn't much else to gain from this particular machine.

It was unfortunate that Jason was at college, as his home wouldn't reveal as much as Allen's. He saw a few pictures, but for the most part he lived in a furnished home. His parents had already donated most of his belongings and turned his room into crafts room. Will would need to rely on his phone to get a better idea of Jason's day to day life.

With everything packed up, he turned to look at Jack who was sitting on Allen's bed. His hands were covering his face and his elbows were resting on his knees.

"Jack?" he started, concern flooding him. Maybe there was more going on than what Will thought.

Jack sat up straight and gave Will a small look, and reached inside his suit pocket. It was an old gesture, back when Jack still smoked. When Jack realized what he was doing, he pulled his hand away from his torso and rubbed his hands on his thighs. Now Will knew something was wrong.

"Look, you don't need to talk if you don't want to," Will started, "but I'm here." Jack was a man that threw himself into his work and didn't socialize much outside of it. The two were friends, they'd been through too many cases together not to form some kind of bond, but Will rarely initiated conversations like this. Maybe Jack needed it.

"I think Bella's cheating." He brought his hands together, lacing his fingers and running his thumbs along the outside of his hands. He didn't look at Will as he spoke, staring off to the side instead. "When you and Molly-- You never told me why you two divorced."

Will took a breath and leaned back on the computer chair. It was his turn to look away, but he understood Jack. He'd shared a big piece of information and was looking for something in return. "She lost her first husband. He got sick. It was sudden. He was a baseball player." He started to pick at the worn leather on the arm rest. "She didn't think I was going to make it after that last hunt." He had nearly lost his arm, had it chewed apart by a vampire who tried to rip it from its socket before Will had doused it in holy water and wound up partially caught on fire in the process. He'd nearly bled out by the time he was found and the remainder of his arm was covered in blisters from his shirt catching on fire. This was his first case since.

“Molly had already seen one husband die. Wally was already terrified of hospitals. For a while there, I gave up hunting for her, but-- I couldn’t do it. She didn’t want to be with someone who willingly put their life in danger. She told me she couldn’t watch me commit suicide.” He looked up at Jack, who was now watching him. “This life is easier without attachments. I don’t want to put their lives in danger, and I can’t leave hunting, even if I want to.”

“Yeah. Yeah.” Jack coughed in the back of his throat and sat up straighter. “She’s been distant. I recommended couple’s counseling, but she doesn’t want it. We’ve been together too long. I don’t want to lose her. I wonder if it’s too late. Too many years with long days and traveling out of state.”

“Maybe after this, you two can go on vacation together. You met her in Italy, right? Maybe it’s time to woo your wife again.”

Jack chuckled, and stood up, shaking off the moment and grabbing two of the boxes. “Come on. Let’s go back home.”

Will grabbed the last one and followed him out, letting Jack thank Ms. Martin for her cooperation.

With everything loaded up, he climbed into the vehicle and relaxed into the seat. Once they were on the highway, Will said, “I have a meeting with the Baltimore pack tonight.”

“You sure that’s a good idea?”

“It’s the only one I have. And they won’t talk to you.”

Since Will wasn’t fully human, and since he’d helped the pack find the body of one of their members on a previous case, they were friendly with him. Friendly enough to grant an audience. Besides, the wolf queen was fond of him, even if the pack was neutral towards him.

Jack wasn’t a big fan of the supernaturals, though. Dealing with too many supernatural killers tended to cloud his judgement on them. He’d warn them, do his duty, but he tended to keep his distance when it came to personal interactions. “I want a report on it tomorrow.”

Will agreed. “Hopefully they’ll have some information or insight.”

“If not, you can warn them for us. Even if they’ve already been hit, it can’t hurt to let them know newer wolves are being targeted.”

“Yeah.”

Silence stretched between them after that. Exhaustion tugged at him. By the time they made it onto the plane, Will didn’t want to keep up conversation, and decided to nap for the short journey back to DC.

Chapter End Notes

Guess who we get to meet next chapter? ;D

Also endlessly blown away that 69 of you now like this! Thank you so much~ You're all so wonderful.

Four

Chapter Notes

Late upload, but it's still technically Tuesday! Hope you like the chapter.

Note: Whoops! Noticed a few mistakes. The last portion of the chapter is redone!

When he returned home, Alana was waiting. He gave her the magnets he'd picked up in the airport and she kissed his cheek before taking her own dog back home with her. He showered, getting the stench of airport off of him and napped surrounded by the smell of home and dogs. He fed them, let them out, and dressed in hiking gear to make it through the woods unhindered.

His badge was clipped to his belt, his over the shoulder holster hidden underneath a thick plaid shirt, rolled up over his forearms to combat the heat. His undershirt was tucked into his jeans, the stark white helping him to stand out against the woods. Though it was difficult to hide from a werewolf. They could probably hear him and smell him already, but he knew where he was going. It simply took a bit to get there.

As they probably planned to hunt afterwards, the meeting was set late in the evening and deep into the woods. Less wandering humans for the newer wolves to come across.

He could see light through the trees, a bonfire to help guide his way. He clicked off his flashlight and added it to his belt, making sure not to trip on any tree roots. Talking could be heard ahead of him, which meant the pack meeting had already started.

When he stumbled into the clearing, a wolf reached for him and helped him to stand.

"Thank you," he mumbled.

Most of the wolves were already nude or partially there. Unlike humans, they didn't always feel comfortable in clothing, too itchy on sensitive skin. A few were already in little puppy piles, wrapped around each other in a comfortable way that humans didn't seem to be capable of. He flushed, despite the fact that he had seen this a few times, never fully comfortable around anyone in such a natural state that he wasn't intimate with. It always felt like he was invading their privacy, even if they didn't mind.

The pack consisted of around 70 people. Over half of them were here, but this wasn't an official meeting. That'd come closer to the full moon and every member would be in attendance. For now only the newer wolves were required to attend, but those that could tended to join in.

Most were standing, only the queen situated on an altar, or what had once been one. She was nude as well, legs crossed and leaning back as she listened to one of her betas speak.

Valda Tully was a beautiful woman. Her long blonde hair was striped with silver, reflecting the light of the fire and moon until she appeared to be glowing with it. Her eyes reflected the light as she took in Will joining them, and gave him a cheeky wink before turning back to her wolf. Taking the hint he kept quiet, simply joining the wolves around the fire and staring into it instead of any of those around him.

He wasn't good with people. The thought of being here alone and having to negotiate was -- unfortunate. Will had tried to arrange a private meeting at Tully's firm, but she had a few cases she needed to focus on.

"This is pack business, Mr. Graham. I'd rather you speak to all of us," her email had read.

All her wolves had a voice, which made her one of the most powerful and beloved pack leaders in Baltimore's history. Even if she'd earned her title drenched in blood.

There were talks back and forth for a while, Will drowned it out for some time until there was a body standing in front of him.

Tully gave him a smile and leaned forward, brushing her nose against his cheekbone and sniffing him. Will tilted his head back and gave her access to his neck in submission. She purred at his response, something he'd been trained to do and a sign of respect for her and her pack. Even if she wasn't in charge of him, responsible for him, and he had no ties to the pack, he'd read enough to know how to be polite in supernatural company.

Her hands reached up and cupped his face as she pulled back, drawing his face until their eyes met. "Welcome to our pack, William Graham."

"Thank you for having me," he whispered as his eyes darted back and forth between hers. Her smiled emphasized the lines around her lips, the crinkles by her eyes, but she still didn't look anywhere near her age. Benefits of being an active werewolf. She had to keep in shape to keep her position. Any challenging wolf would need to go through all her subordinates, but that didn't mean she could relax and take her position lightly.

"Come." She grabbed his wrist and brought him over towards the altar. She stopped, faced him towards the fire and pack, and went to sit on her altar once more. Her second, who happened to be her younger brother and closer to him in age, came to stand next to him. His hands were collapsed behind his back. Ex military, though Will couldn't remember what branch. He was just as chatty as Will was.

"Will Graham is here to speak with us about the murder of our brother, Theodore McCartney. He was murdered by an unknown enemy." Her voice was powerful, though not overly loud. All the wolves would be able to hear her.

He nodded and took a breath, glancing around at some of the wolves who began to murmur amongst themselves. A howl could be heard on the other side of the fire, a high pitched whine before a yelp sounded off. Someone must have shifted.

Will stood taller, before speaking, “Hello. I wish I could be here under better circumstances, but-- I suppose I wouldn’t be here at all.” He glanced down, rubbing at his hands before purposefully shoving them into his pockets to keep them still. “I can’t give details on the investigation, not outside of what has been made public. What I can say is that whoever murdered Tod was a supernatural creature. He’s targeting new wolves along the Eastern coast. The police are going to warn other packs, but I was hoping you could help warn others.

“That’s not all. I want to know if any of you have any information. Were any of you at the club? Did any of you hear anything out of the ordinary? I understand not wanting to go the police station, but I brought a recorder. We can have anonymous confessions. You can email me. Call me. Madam Tully has my contact information.” He glanced back at her, before facing forward once more. “Thank you.” His hands tapped on his legs a couple of times.

Tully spoke once more. “Thank you, Mr. Graham. As your queen, and as we are mourning, I urge all of you to give any information you have. Any thoughts?”

A man stepped forward then, though he was not a wolf. Will recognized him as a vampire immediately, and while the man made no threat, he was prepared to reach for his gun if necessary. From the brief glimpse of the man’s face, he ad high cheekbones, but the light didn’t offer him many details and Will wouldn’t risk looking into his eyes. He stared at his chest instead, taken aback by the 1700s period clothing. Most vampires these days tended to attempt blending into modern society, but this man didn’t. His shirt was poofy, cuffed at his wrists, and he noticed a ruffled ascot tucked into a vest which should look absolutely ridiculous, yet the man wore it with purpose.

Will wanted to laugh, yet he found himself unable to. If this man wore clothing that old, he was powerful. Or he was trying to give the illusion that he was more powerful than he was. Vampire society was full of headache inducing politics.

“Mine queen. I hast a suggestion.” His words were heavily accented, though Will couldn’t place it. It was difficult to tell with the strangely broken English.

Tully smiled, amusement touching her features. “You’re forgetting the century, Lord.”

“Apologies,” he bowed, and Will caught a glimpse of a ribbon tying longer hair back. He knew Tully wouldn’t put him in a dangerous situation, and this vampire didn’t have a bounty on his head (Will would know), but he wasn’t entirely comfortable near him. “It hast--has--been some time since I spoke English.” His words were carefully chosen, though not slow. Will found himself curious if he was relearning English. Then he was standing up once more and Will averted his eyes again.

“Of course. Will, this is Count Hannibal Lecter. He’s here on behalf of the Baltimore Brood.”

“Yes, my master was-- curious. It’s a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Graham.” He tilted his head forward once more. Will wondered if all that bobbing gave him motion sickness.

A vampire’s eyes were entrancing to humans, and while he had his empathic ability, it didn’t make him immune to a vampire’s hypnotic stares. It was illegal for a vampire to use it on an

individual, as it could have lasting effects, but vampires had a nasty way of not getting caught.

He nodded as well, eyes still downturned. “Yes, it’s-- nice to meet you, Count Lecter.”

“Please, call me Hannibal.”

Will didn’t bother hiding the frown.

“Lord, I believe you had a suggestion?” Tully said, bringing the conversation back on task.

“Yes, thank you, Queen.” He took a breath, and glanced to Will. “I understand vampires and werewolves art not on your force. Perhaps a wolf and a vampire can behold your crimescene. Our heightened senses may beest use.”

Tully came forward once more, standing between the two men. “I agree.” She tilted her head and looked around the pack. “Deion. Will you go? I trust your nose.”

He stepped forward, and nodded, the fire dancing off his dark skin. “Yes. I’ll text you tomorrow.”

Will agreed, “Let me know when you’re free and we can go together.” They’d worked together before, and Deion was an ex-cop and had helped Will capture a rogue Alpha who slaughtered his pack near Frederick. He was pleased Tully suggested him.

Lecter spoke up once more and Will jumped slightly. He’d forgotten the vampire was there. It bothered him. Normally he was more aware of vampires, but there was something decidedly *off* about this one. “We can go tonight while the wolves hunt. I cannot travel under sun. I’m sure the surrounding businesses wilt beest closed, no?”

“Perfect,” Tully agreed. “If you help us on this, Lord Lecter, it will show us your Master is serious about the negotiations.”

The vampire smiled at her, inclining his head once more, “My master is, and I admire your pragmatic approach.”

“I’ve never been fond of politics. You’ll find I’m rather direct,” she smiled.

“I believe you and I will get along wonderfully, mine queen,” he held out his hand, and she placed her in his. He leaned forward, placing a small kiss on her knuckles.

Will averted his eyes again, finding himself uncomfortable with the display. Perhaps it was his own nature, his distaste for romance after his divorce.

He came out of his memories to the sound of Tully addressing her pack, speaking of the hunt they were about to go on.

“William-- May I call you William?” Lecter asked from directly next to him.

He shuddered slightly, turning to look at Lecter’s chest. “Yes, but I prefer Will.”

“A strong, sturdy name.”

Will didn’t know how to respond to that. So he didn’t. Instead just awkwardly watching Tully while she spoke to her pack and silently wanting the count to go away. His wish did not come true.

Hannibal watched with him for a few moments, before asking, “Are you going to runneth with the wolves?”

“Runneth,” he scoffed. “No. I’m not going to ‘runneth’ with wolves.”

The vampire was silent for a few moments, before speaking again. “If 't be true, shalt we wend to thy scene?”

Will turned to look at his torso then, a small smile on his lips despite himself. “You’re speaking like that on purpose, aren’t you?”

Hannibal didn’t answer, instead walking towards the direction of the parking lot where the pack, and Will, had parked. Will hadn’t agreed to going anywhere with him, but wolves were beginning to shift and while he was uncomfortable with vampires, he didn’t feel like spending time with a pack of shifted wolves. Newer ones tended to have poor control, even when surrounded by fellow wolves. For the moment, Hannibal was the lesser threat, and Tully knew who he was with and where they were going.

Just in case, he texted Jack anyway with a description of Hannibal.

There was silence for a few minutes before Will caught up with him. Hannibal was taking his time, hands behind his back and walking as if they were out on a stroll. Meanwhile, Will took out his flashlight and was careful not to trip over anything. He knew how to navigate woods, but he’d never have the grace of the undead.

“Tis a lovely night, is it not?”

“We’re about to go to a murder scene. You sound almost chipper.”

“Death is a familiar subject to a vampire.”

“Because you’re dead?”

Hannibal glanced at him, “Because humanity doest not have our lifespan.”

Will frowned and wondered how many humans Hannibal had watched over the years. “Why didn’t you turn them?”

“Humanity is precious, William. As is mortality. It’s a motivator to many.” There was silence once more as Will contemplated that. “Have you heard the theory that vampires art incapable of creation?”

He had no idea what this had to do with anything, which meant Will found himself in the company of a pretentious vampire. Surprise surprise. “Yes, though it’s a very old idea. One

that's been disproven by a few modern artists. The Vampirates are a modern band that's all over the radio."

"Though it could beest argued none of it is unique."

"It could be argued nothing these days is unique."

Hannibal chuckled at that.

They made it out to the side road. There were still no lights, the road wasn't paved, just a long dirt road that moved through a portion of the woods. He pulled out his keys and hit the button to unlock it, before pausing and glancing at Hannibal. "Are we taking my car?"

Hannibal's head tilted as he took in the words, "If you're offering. If you'd prefer I meet you there, I'd request an address."

He thought about it for a moment. However, he understood his prejudices shouldn't get the better of him. Hannibal had kept his hands to himself, a respectful distance, merely offering idle chitchat. "No, it's fine. It'll be faster this way."

He clicked his flashlight off, and headed towards his door. Before he could reach for his door handle, Hannibal was there and opening the door for him. "Please, allow me."

Will wasn't sure he schooled his face into polite disinterest in time, as that was a little weird. However, he climbed into his car and got situated, allowing Hannibal to close the door behind him. He adjusted his holster to fit comfortably with the seat belt, and Hannibal climbed in after him. Under the dome light he was able to get a better look at the man. He was older, old enough that by the time he was turned he already had silver running through his darker strands. A few fell to just underneath his high and prominent cheekbones, the rest pulled back by a white ribbon. He had a strange lack of eyebrows, and an interesting profile. Everything about him was oddly capturing, though he made sure to avoid his eyes, he was certain they'd fit the rest of his features. It suited him, even if it was obvious the man didn't belong to this century.

With his curiosity sated, he started his car. He turned his stereo off, which had been playing a podcast on his way to the meeting. Switching his car into gear he began to drive carefully down the road. When they made their way to the road proper, he started towards Baltimore. He'd planned on going home after this, but apparently the world had other plans.

He really needed sleep.

"I find driving strange," Hannibal offered after they had merged onto the 95.

There weren't many wooded areas near Baltimore, but Patapsco Valley State Park was rather beautiful. It meant they'd have about a twenty minute drive before getting to Baltimore, but he'd still have an hour before getting home. At least he could ditch Hannibal there and listen to his podcast on the drive home.

It took Will a second to realize Hannibal had spoken, and probably expected Will to say something in return. “Why? Do you drive?”

“I knoweth how to. I simply prefer other methods of transportation.”

Will glanced over at him for a second. The almost bored look on Hannibal’s face as he carefully stared forward. He made decent use of the space afforded, elbow on the middle console, his other arm resting along the window. “What methods do you prefer?” he asked as he turned back to the road.

“Horses,” he supplied. “Graceful creatures. They take effort, work. Their respect is earned, whereas humans taketh their cars for granted.”

“I had to work to buy this car.” Will frowned. “Cars aren’t cheap.”

“I didst not mean to undermine thy work, William.” He seemed amused, despite his words. “I merely miss stables and long rides through the country. I’m finding America doesn’t giveth such.”

“Are you new to America?”

“Quite. This is my first week hither. The colonies didn’t calleth to me until thy recent legislation.”

That surprised Will, though it did explain Hannibal’s older slang. “When were you last in England?”

Hannibal was silent for a moment, before taking a breath and letting it out. He could see from the corner of his eyes Hannibal tilt his head as he considered the answer. “The early 1600s. The first ships wast making the journey to the colonies.”

It was difficult for Will to wrap his mind around that. Any creature that lived so long was unnatural. He couldn’t imagine having that many memories, or keeping up with the changes between centuries. Let alone the differences of languages, slang, careers, technology-- it must be grueling. He wondered briefly if Hannibal remembered everything. There weren't enough studies on vampire minds, but if the brain was dead, if it could merely reanimate, was it capable of creating new memories and mapping within the mind?

They pulled into the parking lot near the crime scene.

Everything had already been cleaned up. The police tape was gone, no officers stood on duty. There were times the FBI tended to keep crime scenes open longer, but this was a heavy populated area. Most of the information they could grab was already done so, but perhaps Hannibal could offer some insight. If this monster was a vampire, he might recognize tendencies and smells Will couldn’t. Could perhaps point them to a creature if Hannibal was familiar with him.

He climbed out of the car and headed towards the alleyway with Hannibal walking silently behind him.

When he reached the end of the alleyway, he pointed to where the remains had been. “I don’t have the pictures with me, but this was where the body was found.”

“The smelleth of blood is stout.”

Will moved to the side, giving Hannibal access to the scene. It also allowed him to watch the vampire.

Hannibal was graceful when he moved, utterly still in a way that only the dead could be when he wasn’t. He had sharp features, and now that he wasn’t concerned about Hannibal catching his gaze, he allowed himself to memorize them.

The vampire was still, and Will noted once more that Hannibal didn't pretend to be human. Some vampires will make sure to breathe, blink, have small movements and fidgets that humans can’t seem to help. A mark of the living. Hannibal doesn’t seem to care. Or he merely spent more time around vampires than humans.

After a few moments of Hannibal looking about the crime scene, he took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and head tilted his head up. “It's difficult to scent anything ov'r the blood. Thither wast several people. Three, peradventure four.”

“Peradventure?”

“Three or four creatures.”

Will frowns. Three would make sense. The wolf, guardian, and killer. But four?

Hannibal turned to Will, and the hunter moved his eyes down to the middle of Hannibal’s chest. The vampire made a small amused noise, “I has't no desire to enrapture thee. Tis illegal in this country, aye?”

“Yes.” Will kept his eyes where they were anyway. “It takes some vampires time to get used to.”

“Hmm.” Hannibal turned once more to glance around. “I smelleth a wolf-- two of those folk. Thither eke the smelleth of fusty death -- t’could beest a vampire or another elder creature. The fourth is ,” he paused, searching for the right word, “the air ere a storm.”

Will had to take a moment to translate that. Four beings: two wolves, something dead, and something that smelled of ozone. Interesting. “A witch?”

“Mayhap.”

Will contemplated it, knew he’d make a separate report for Jack including the information Hannibal provided, though he wasn't sure if he should explain where he got the information from.

Hannibal added, “There’s a chance the creature is producing the storm, though thither a scent with it -- lavender. I believeth the creature is male, the storm female.”

“Any particular reason why?”

The vampire smiled, then glances at the end of the alleyway.

Will followed his eyes and noticed a blonde woman suddenly standing at the entrance of the alleyway. Will hadn't heard anything, and his fingers twitched as he prepared himself in case something happened. However, she remained where she was.

Will squinted, attempted to get more details, but with the lack of light and her large hat, she couldn't make anything out. Merely a sleek silhouette, a dress, heels, and a hat. He wouldn't be able to give enough information on her if she decided to act.

“Forsooth I am needed elsewhere.” Hannibal bowed politely to Will, pulling the hunter from his reverie, then headed towards the blonde. He offered her his arm, but paused and turned to look back to Will. “If thee wish to see me, thee may findeth me at the Wilkens Private Library. Simply asketh the librarian for Count Hannibal Lecter. Enjoy thy night.”

With that, Will found himself alone in the alleyway, contemplating the curiosity of one Hannibal Lecter and the strange, silent woman.

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